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Wellness Through Answers News

March/April 2019

*Linking Connecticut Patients, Families, and Residents to
Reliable Health Information*

New Name

The name "HealthNet" is no longer used by our library's consumer health information service. Our service is now called "Wellness Through Answers." To be consistent, we have renamed our newsletter, too. Although our name has changed, our focus remains the same: linking you to reliable health information.

Medical Device Manufacturers Hide Injuries and Malfunctions

"Maude" is a public database created by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to report patient deaths, injuries, and malfunction of medical devices. Medical experts rely on Maude to learn about technology that could harm patients. Unknown to doctors, patients, and even officials at the FDA, there is another, private reporting system for manufacturers. Device manufacturers can avoid reporting injuries and problems to Maude by requesting a reporting exemption. The exemption allows manufacturers to record injuries and malfunctions to an alternative report hidden from public view. The reporting exemption has made crucial safety information unavailable to doctors and patients. As a result, patients have been injured or killed by devices that malfunctioned. A [Kaiser Health News investigation](#) pulls back the curtain on this dangerous reporting practice.

Measles Outbreaks and Vaccine Safety

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), [unvaccinated international travelers have caused measles outbreaks](#) this year in New York, Washington, Texas, and Illinois. Measles is still common in many parts of the world. The CDC website reports measles outbreaks this year in [16 countries](#). Unvaccinated adults and children traveling to these countries are at risk of contracting measles.

Medications for Opioid Addiction are Effective but Difficult to Get

Methadone and buprenorphine are effective in treating opioid use disorder (OUD). Patients taking these medications are [50% less likely to die](#) of a drug overdose. In 2017, [80% of people needing](#) these long-term medications did not get them. According to a new report from The National Academies of Science, Technology, and Medicine (NASEM), there are several major barriers to broader use of OUD medications. These barriers include: misunderstanding and stigma around OUD; inadequate training and education for professionals who come in contact with people with OUD; regulation of methadone and buprenorphine; and the fragmented system of care for people with OUD. You can download a copy of the [NASEM report](#) for free.

Pain Apps Prove Effective

A [new study](#) provides evidence that pain apps reduce the intensity of pain and severity of depression experienced by patients with chronic pain. The widespread use of cell phones could make it possible for pain apps to benefit a large number of patients. Pain apps can track patients between doctor visits, providing more detailed and accurate information than what patients can recall. An interview with one of the study's authors appears on the website, [MEDPAGE Today](#).

Young Blood is No Fountain of Youth

Plasma from young people is being promoted as an anti-aging treatment. Clinics offering "young blood" transfusions say it can slow natural aging and prevent Alzheimer's and other diseases associated with old age. Plasma is the liquid portion of blood. It transports red and white blood cells and platelets throughout our bodies. It also contains proteins vital to blood clotting and immunity. Plasma from young donors is processed and sometimes filtered, then transfused into aging adults. The Food and Drug Administration has [issued a warning](#) that there are no human studies showing anti-aging benefits, and that young blood transfusions can be risky. Young blood transfusions are expensive. Clinics in several major cities [charge \\$8,000 for one liter and \\$12,000 for two liters](#). Typically treatments involve multiple transfusions.

News About the Health Benefits of Reading

Print books are [more engaging](#) than digital books for very young children. A [new study](#) found that when parents shared print books with their toddlers, the children were more attentive, and there was more verbal interaction between parent and child than when parents shared digital books. This difference held true even when parents read sophisticated digital books with animation and sound effects.

The British National Health Service prescribes books to patients suffering from mental health conditions. The program called "[Reading Well](#)" includes self-help books and fiction. The self-help books help patients learn more about their condition and how to manage it. The fiction titles are mood-boosting books recommended by readers.

Looking for sound health advice with a dash of romance? Try reading a [Jane Austen novel](#). Although Ms. Austen wrote over 200 years ago, her beliefs about exercise, diet, and rejuvenation, still ring true today.

Making Retirement Successful

[10,000 people a day](#) hit the age of 65, long considered retirement age. According to a 2016 Federal Reserve Board study, [a third of retirees](#) return to work on a full or part-time basis. Although retirees may re-enter the work force for financial reasons, others return due to boredom, lack of shared interest with their spouse, loss of identity, or depression and physical deterioration due to reduced activity or socializing. What can you do to prepare for retirement? [Next Avenue](#), a news and information site catering to older adults, has a [few suggestions](#) for making your retirement successful.

More Health Information You Can Use:

- Counties in Colorado and Iowa top list of [healthiest communities](#)
- [Untire](#) - app helps cancer patients manage extreme fatigue
- Use your iPhone as a [magnifying glass](#)
- [Live captions](#) and subtitles for PowerPoint
- How to make text on iPhones [bigger and easier to read](#)
- Eat [bananas](#) to reduce risk of stroke
- Tips for getting the [lowest price](#) on prescription drugs
- Marijuana [brownies and gummies](#) seem harmless but can be dangerous
- [Prediabetes](#) "diagnosis" harms patients but benefits doctors and drug companies

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